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point—including how to point relative clauses restrictive and non-restrictive—how to paragraph, how to study words and acquire words for active use, how to love composition and know good English when it is seen—all these things can be so taught in the grades that future progress shall be rapid and delightful.

There is possibly one word of qualification needed to Miss Spalding's admirable suggestions; it is easy to teach too much. Children pick up analytic processes faster than they are sometimes supposed to do; and a boy can distinguish too readily between metaphors and similes; can know too many etymologies that may be right and may not; and he may become free of words that in his mouth will sound like pedantry. But dear me! what a relief it would be to see a few lads over-taught in English, even in "recent exemplifications of false philology."

E. H. LEWIS

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An Introduction to the Study of American Literature. By BRANDER MATTHEWS, A.M., LL.B., Professor of Literature in Columbia College. (American Book Company.)

OF making manuals for the text-book study of literature there is but small promise of the end. Many teachers know nothing of library methods, or are without libraries with which to use them, and many who have the wisdom lack the energy necessary to conduct work in literature by confining the study to strictly literary materials. Until the average instructor shall be convinced that it is better to guide his class to independent impressions and estimates of half a dozen authors than to cover the whole ground prescriptively, text-books will be in large demand, and literature will wait and suffer as hitherto.

Professor Matthews' book is not a manual of the usual sort. There are no "chapters," there is no discussion of periods, or attempt to set up philosophical divisions in the history of writing or of reading in our commonwealth of letters. The author treats, in an introduction, of literature in general, following this with a six-page mention of colonial books and authorship from John Smith to Jonathan Edwards. The book proper, which then begins, consists of fourteen sketches, in chronologic order, of the great careers that have furnished, essentially, the most and best of what is known as American literature. The subjects respectively are Franklin, Irving, Cooper, Bryant, Halleck and Drake, Emerson, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Whittier, Poe, Holmes, Thoreau,

Lowell, and Parkman. Minor writers such as Bancroft and Prescott, Walt Whitman and Mrs. Stowe, are treated in a supplemental chapter, and the book ends with a few observations upon recent literary tendencies, and some summarizing of the traits or principles met with in the major authors treated. Each of the fourteen chief topics is introduced by a portrait of the author to be discussed, and illustrated by a facsimile of some letter or other manuscript from his own hand. The aim of the author, as declared in the preface, is to arouse the interest of the student in the authors as actual men, and to enable him to see for himself the successive stages of the growth of American literature.

The aim and plan are praiseworthy, and easily practicable within the compass, 250 pages, of the volume. The biographical part of the work is admirably done. The essentials of each personal and literary life are faithfully and accurately told. There is much good style and phrasing throughout the whole. When we come to the critical paragraphs, there is likely of course to be some disagreement, but the author is moderate and conservative everywhere. To tell the pupil so plainly the real literary worth of his authors may not be old-fashioned in many parts of the country where the book will be used, but it should be, and soon will be everywhere. There are questions at the end of each division of the work, to draw out and guide the learner's judgments. But one regrets that the pupil will get off with so little thinking done squarely for himself.

One questions whether it were not well to have treated somewhat more fully the wonderful progress of the novel in this country. Henry James is not claimed as a product of our culture, or even mentioned. There is no allusion to J. T. Trowbridge, who was regarded before the war as our greatest novelist, so that even Lowell, on undertaking the editorship of the *Atlantic Monthly*, secured from him a story for the opening number. How far the taste of the country at that time ranged below the level of Emerson and Hawthorne, it would have been well to note in connection with Holmes' career, for it was Holmes that, with his "Breakfast" papers, lifted the people to the new level. Then should there not have been something by which the student may be helped to put Emerson in his true place in American letters? A hint or two as to how to appreciate and appropriate his work would have been most timely. Is it not misleading to say, as is said (p. 14), "that American writers are of more interest to us here in the United States than are the recent writers of the other great branches of Eng-

lish literature, the writers now living in the British Isles"? No author from among ourselves has been of more interest to the American reading public than Dr. Watson of Liverpool, as the enormous and continued sale of his *Brier Bush* testifies. Heroism and worth need not be American, to stir the American heart.

But Professor Matthews has not attempted to give us more than an introduction to American literature, and there may well be differences of opinion as to what an introduction should include. It is a safe and valuable book, and should in several features set the standard for future handbooks of literature, whether American or English.

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Elementary and Constructive Geometry. By EDGAR H. NICHOLS.
Longmans, Green & Co., 1896.

THIS book has been prepared mainly with reference to the recommendations of the National Committee of Ten. In it "the main facts of plane and solid geometry are taught, not as an exercise in logical deduction and exact demonstration, but in as concrete and objective a form as possible." Designed for pupils between the ages of ten and thirteen it gives little space to the establishment of principles by logical proof. The main object of the author has been to make the child perfectly familiar with the facts and the simple properties and relations of geometric forms and figures. This is to be accomplished by observing diagrams of geometric conceptions, by measuring them, by drawing them, by making them of pasteboard and other materials, and by means of the suggestive questions and discussions. Many useful and important working principles are thus learned without effort, and their certainty impressed by means of abundant concrete illustrations and frequent experimental tests.

It is expected that the book will be used as a supplement to the class-room work rather than as a text-book. After a principle has been developed in class by working out many practical problems, a lesson in the book covering the same general ground may be assigned. At the end of the book twenty blank pages have been reserved for a summary by the student of the principles and definitions as he develops them. In the text heavy type is used in stating principles and to indicate new geometric ideas as they are introduced.